

USAID/OFDA LOGISTICS AND RELIEF COMMODITIES SECTOR UPDATE – OCTOBER 2011

SECTOR OVERVIEW

As the lead U.S. Government (USG) office for international disaster response, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) facilitates and coordinates the purchase and movement of emergency relief commodities worldwide. USAID/OFDA stockpiles relief supplies at regional warehouses in Miami, Florida; Pisa, Italy; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Stockpiled commodities include blankets, plastic sheeting for emergency shelter construction, family hygiene kits, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, zodiac boats, 10-liter collapsible water containers, 10,000-liter water storage bladders, and trailer-mounted water treatment units. In addition to stockpiled commodities, USAID/OFDA maintains a full-time logistics team that helps facilitate a rapid response in the aftermath of disaster. During a large-scale response, USAID/OFDA can supplement the team with USAID/OFDA-trained logisticians, including staff from the U.S. Forest Service's Disaster Assistance Support Program and Urban Search-and-Rescue teams from the Fairfax County, Virginia, Fire and Rescue Department and the Los Angeles County, California, Fire Department.

USAID/OFDA logistics officers in Washington, D.C., coordinate the delivery of relief supplies from regional warehouse hubs to affected areas via air, sea, or land. USAID/OFDA logisticians can also rapidly procure relief items that are not stockpiled in regional warehouses from numerous suppliers around the world. As the majority of emergency responses require airlifts, USAID/OFDA works closely with USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance to utilize commercial aircraft when necessary in order to expedite the delivery of relief supplies. Logistics staff in the field receive the commodities and ensure that supplies reach implementing partners for distribution to affected populations. USAID/OFDA may pre-position personnel and emergency relief supplies in the event of an impending disaster, such as a hurricane or volcanic eruption, to ensure that assistance is available to affected communities as humanitarian needs arise. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$100 million for relief commodities—including in-kind assistance, grants, and associated transport assistance—to 50 countries throughout the world.



Flood-affected individuals in Pakistan receive USAID/OFDA-funded blankets and other emergency relief supplies. (Photo by International Organization for Migration).

SUPPORTING RELIEF AND RECOVERY IN PAKISTAN

Unprecedented flooding, beginning in July 2010, affected more than 20 million people and covered one-fifth of Pakistan's territory. The floods caused significant damage to infrastructure, limiting population movement and complicating logistical efforts to deliver critical humanitarian assistance to affected populations. Lending technical support, USAID/OFDA logisticians helped to establish and serve on the Pakistan-led Joint Aviation Coordination Cell—a body created to task and coordinate air assets in order to improve the delivery of aid to flood-affected populations.

Between late July and October 2010, USAID/OFDA logistics officers dispatched 24 flights carrying more than 237,000 blankets, 208,000 water containers, 12,000 rolls of plastic sheeting, 12 water storage bladders, and other emergency relief supplies to Pakistan from the USAID/OFDA warehouses in Dubai, Pisa, and Miami. Benefiting local manufacturers and the local economy, USAID/OFDA also purchased local supplies, valued at nearly \$3.5 million, including 600,000 bars of soap, 200,000 water containers, 120,000 tarps, and 170,000 blankets.

ENSURING AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO CHOLERA IN HAITI

The Government of Haiti officially confirmed a cholera outbreak in Haiti on October 21, 2010—the first such outbreak in the country in nearly a century, according to the U.N. World Health Organization. Between late October and December 2010, USAID/OFDA logistics specialists dispatched emergency relief supplies—via air and sea—critical to the prevention and treatment of cholera, including 5.3 million oral rehydration salt sachets, 15 million water purification tablets, 600,000 liters of Ringer’s lactate



A health professional at a cholera clinic in Artibonite Department, Haiti, unpacks a USAID/OFDA-provided hygiene kit. (Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID.)

intravenous solution, and 2,000 cholera beds—valued at nearly \$5.6 million. In total, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$14.8 million to support logistics and the delivery of relief supplies for cholera prevention and treatment in Haiti.

Addressing a specific need, the USAID/OFDA logistics team in Washington, D.C., procured 25 diarrheal disease kits from McKesson—a pharmaceutical distributor—through the Interagency Agreement with the U.S. General Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The combined kits contained supplies sufficient to treat 10,000 moderate or severe cholera cases. The entire procurement process, from finalizing the contents to shipping the kits to Haiti took less than 14 days.

In November 2010, a team of USAID/OFDA logisticians traveled to Haiti to assess the supply chain system of partners responding to the cholera outbreak and make recommendations to help meet increased medical commodity demands. The pre-positioned stocks, including the diarrheal disease kits, allowed USAID/OFDA to rapidly respond after the assessment team found that although most health facilities had adequate treatment and prevention supplies, smaller rural clinics faced challenges due to inconsistent supply sources.

TRANSPORTING STAFF AND SUPPLIES TO LIBYA

In February 2011, following civilian demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt, Libyans began protesting against the government led by Muammar Qadhafi. Libyan security forces under Qadhafi’s authority responded to the protesting crowds with violence, and the escalating conflict resulted in large-scale population outflows to neighboring countries, disruption to livelihoods, and increased medical needs.

USAID/OFDA logistics specialists played a pivotal role in facilitating USG staff movement to and within Libya, as well as in delivering emergency relief supplies, including 12 interagency emergency health kits—each sufficient to support 10,000 people for three months. A USAID/OFDA logistician traveled to Malta and to Crete, Greece, to assess the logistical capacity of the islands to serve as a staging ground for the humanitarian response. Working with the logistics officer on USAID/OFDA’s Response Management Team in Washington, D.C., the logistician also procured a boat to transport the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) from Malta to Benghazi, eastern Libya. Once in Libya, the USAID/DART assessed humanitarian needs and coordinated emergency response activities. USAID/OFDA logisticians also deployed to Tunisia to lend technical expertise in Logistics Cluster meetings and facilitate the arrival of commodities—including 2,000 blankets, 40 rolls of plastic sheeting, and 9,600 water containers—from USAID/OFDA’s warehouse in Pisa, Italy, to the port city of Djerba to benefit conflict-affected people who had arrived in Tunisia from Libya. As humanitarian organizations gained access to western areas of Libya, USAID/OFDA provided additional logistical support and, through partners, distributed relief items such as hygiene kits, blankets, and sleeping mats to displaced people in the Nafusah Mountains and surrounding areas. In FY 2011, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$5 million to support logistics and the distribution of relief commodities in Libya.

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USAID/OFDA information products are available at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance.